7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

Preface

There is only one way—to have a native himself give the account in his own mother tongue. The problem then resolves itself into finding the native. That is the task I set myself and through a piece of good luck I succeeded in accomplishing it. As the manner of its accomplishment is an interesting and illuminating story in itself, I hope I shall be excused for telling it in some detail.

In the year 1909 I commenced field investigations among the Winnebago Indians living on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River, about twenty-five miles south of Sioux City, Iowa. These Indians had the reputation of being fairly conservative. Perhaps the fact that a Presbyterian mission had in seventeen years succeeded in converting only one family, and a family which then unkindly died without leaving issue, may bear this out.

Among these Indians there lived a family named Blow Snake, consisting of a father and a fair number of children all grown up. Two of these were men quite well known in the tribe for a variety of reasons. These two became my principal informants. They had lived the most exciting of lives, for to the usual round of adventures that fall to the lot of most Indians of that region now, they had added a murder and a conversion, the murder first and the conversion afterwards. The older of the two seemed to be by far the more gifted. His memory was simply prodigious. He recounted to me a ceremony which took him two months, working practically six hours a day, to tell

8:Lurie E-5 (1945-1950)1953 NP12 Winnebago NP12

The Winnebago term for berdache is very uncertain. The last known case in Wisconsin was called dejáŋčowiŋga, usually translated as Blue Lake Woman (dejáŋčowiŋga—dejáŋ: lake or sea; čo: blue; wiŋ: female name ending; ga: name referrent suffix). In Nebraska mention was made of another berdache who had lived in Wisconsin and was called čoranažiŋga or Standing Blue (čoranažiŋga—čo: blue; ra: article; naži: to stand; wiŋ: elided with naži as naziŋ, female name ending; ga: name referrent suffix). The term liáŋge was suggested as a general word for berdache by two Wisconsin informants, and it was translated by several people as "a no good," "a eunuch," "an unmanly man." This word was still in common use in Wisconsin in 1947, but was used among young men as an insult or teasing epithet. These young men claimed to know nothing more about the word except that it carried connotations of weakness and effeminateness.

The characteristics of the Winnebago berdache agree closely with those reported for the Omaha and Ponca but the word used to designate a berdache in both of these latter tribes was mi^{a}-qu-ga, according to Dorsey (378–379). Among the Oglala the berdache had been blessed by a pote wi^{a}kte or hermaphroditic buffalo, wi^{a}kte being the word for berdache. A certain amount of shame had become attached to the role among these Plains Siouan groups by the time it was reported by Dorsey in 1889 and Wissler in 1912, but Wissler (p. 92) said of the Oglala, "In the old days all the berdaches were very wakan."

Knowledge of the berdache among the Winnebago was provided in 1946 through a chance conversation with M.M., a woman who was then about thirty years old. Her parents had been the first Christian converts at the Winnebago community near Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and M.M. had once heard her mother mention "Men who dressed as women." When M.M. attempted tc question her mother, at the writer's request, for more information about the berdache, the mother, then a woman in her seventies, became very angry and said in Winnebago, "Why did you ask about that? That is something we want to forget and not talk about."

Another woman, S.S., a younger sister of Radin's famous informant Crashing Thunder, was next approached and she offered the following account.

> Yes, I used to hear about that, but I don't know much about it. Once there was a man who fasted and he learned that if he dressed like a woman he would be the richest person in the world, but if he wore men's clothes, he die soon. She wore earrings, and bracelets, and necklaces and a shirt like a woman, but his brothers told him . . . her? . . . if he . . . she? . . . put on a skirt they would kill him. There used to be people like that, not just that one. I think liáŋge is the word for them but I don't know, now it's just a slang word and means a no good. Those people did women's work, and they did it real good, better than even women could.

Later M.M., the original informant, was able to prevail upon her mother to provide more information. Her description included all of the points given above except mention of wealth accruing to the berdache. However, M.M.'s mother added that berdaches had been blessed by the moon and had the gift

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20
Pawnee NQ18
Winnebago NP12

and Kiowa. Mooney was present at a palaver at which a Kiowa reported upon his visit to Wovoka. The Kiowa was told by the Paiute prophet to stop dancing; consequently, he branded the Plains Ghost Dance leaders as frauds. "Sitting Bull insisted on the truth of his own representations, and when accused by A'peatan of deceiving the Indians in order to obtain their property, he replied that he had never asked them for ponies which they had given him. . . ." (p. 914). Another Arapaho leader, Black Coyote, appeared to Mooney to be a man who "wishes to be a great priest and medicine man. At the same time he keeps a sharp lookout for his temporal affairs and has managed to accumulate considerable property" and three wives. He was leader of the Ghost Dance and other Indian ceremonies, tribal delegate to Washington, captain of Indian police and county deputy sheriff. He repeatedly asked Mooney "to get him a permanent license . . . to enable him to visit the various reservations at will as a general evangel of Indian medicine and ceremony" (pp. 897–898).

Lesser's (pp. 60–76) data on the Pawnee Ghost Dance leave no doubt that Frank White, its introducer, used the dance for personal aggrandizement. Some of his special doctrines and practices were the following: he was sole authentic prophet; he demanded payment for use of designs seen in visions; he sold all paraphernalia; he was paid for the privilege of holding dances; a small face painting by him cost $5.00. In spite of his eating peyote and drinking whiskey, the Ghost Dancers lavished gifts, money, and pretty girls on him. The revolt against him seemed to result partly from jealousy of his wealth.

The leader of the Caddo Ghost Dance was John Wilson, who was also a shaman and a peyotist.[7] The fact that Wilson later modified the peyote cult in order to collect hundreds of dollars certainly places him in the class of proselyters for gain par excellence. La Barre (p. 158) tells of the wealth he received and makes a classic understatement: "The economic motive seems evident in much of Wilson's behavior."

Except for the case of John Wilson, missionary to the Shawnee, Quapaw, Caddo, Delaware, Osage, Potawatomi, and others, the literature contains but few direct statements suggesting that financial gain motivated agents to spread the peyote cult.[8] However, the very fact that peyote is universally considered to be a cure and that leaders are often looked upon similarly to shamans suggests that carriers of the cult could have been paid for their services. A great many other Indians are known to have proselyted beyond their own tribes.

The Winnebago, John Rave, went to South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin to preach the new religion after establishing the cult among his own people in Nebraska. A Kiowa, Jim Aton, a famous peyote doctor, held meetings for the Creek, Yuchi, Shawnee, Kickapoo, Caddo, Osage, Comanche, Kiowa-Apache, Kiowa, Mescalero-Apache, and Quapaw; also whites and Mexicans.[9] Have these men and other famous proselyters spread the gospel of peyote solely out of love for their fellow men? No doctrine of the peyote cult commands members to go forth and convert other tribes.

That believers have gone out to spread the cult because of possible economic gain is established in the case of Ben Lancaster. It is almost impossible to conclude that Leo Okio and Lone Bear had no other ideas than religion when they held meetings in Nevada. My Uintah Ute informants accused the Sioux, Sam Roan Bear, of spreading peyotism for money, and when the members were broke, he did not

[7] Mooney, 1896*b*, 914–915; La Barre, 1938, 65, 151; Petrullo, 1934, 158.
[8] La Barre; Schultes, 1938.
[9] La Barre, 52, fn. 114.